5/12/67

Dear Hal,

If I have been too brief in the few notes of recent months or not said thank you for the things you sent as though I meant it, I really did and I have been really busy. We have finished supper and I'm to take my wife to her sister, which I haven't done for several months, but she is so tired she had fallen asleep sitting up. Until she rouses, I'll explain a few things.

I'll know Wednesday about CIA WHITEWASH: OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS. My agent (I have one now) liked it so much he read it a second time, immediately. He is so impressed with the overwhelming evidence that he told me not to bother to bring with me when I go to New York next week any refutation of the Phelan and Aynesworth axe jobs (and I know of others I have every right to expect). I have a good deal for it, but if there is anything I have learned about publishers it is that you have no deal until the cash is in the bank.

The book is more than 150,000 words long. On my return from N.O. I wrote a brief epilogue for it. I think I was able to help them.

Because of the things that have happened, I think I'll get back on WWIII immediately and let the Manchester book, the draft of which I could finish in three hard and uninterrupted week, wait till after this is done. I think it has to be done, whether it is profotable or not, and I'll do it. I think III can be very important, especially now. My schedule until after the middle of June, is broken up. I'm clear from then on, as of now. But much time will be taken by a radio series I'm doing, commercially, telling the story of the first book in 39 weeks, each of 10-three minute shows. I've got the first five weeks done while working on CIA WW. It takes a day a week, even ad libbing.

The Bell announcement of WWII has killed my sale for it. I hope they get it out soon. I've not been able to promote it as I did WW. It had to carry its own weight. I'll know pretty soon how they did with the first, and I hope there is some dough with it. We got the royalty on the first 100,000 and paid ourselves close to out of debt (if the money was ever collected to pay for my plane, my situation is that I can use it). Probably by the fall we'll have some dough.

Joe Dolan called me the other night and talked to me about the Phelan piece. He apparently was not satisfied by my belief that Phelan's was an axe-job and my belief that his mention of Ferrie without reference to Marcello when oh, Phelan, was the expert on New Orleans vice is a touchstone. I have reason to believe that Russo did tell Sciambra that there was this party (he did not call it a conspiracy) even if Sciambra did not have it in the memo. I am certain that if he was involved in any funny business on this he'd never have given Phelan the memos. I returned from N.O. without taking the time to write a single memo. I don't think Joe knows how long and hard the work in this field is and how those fellows, all of whom have families, work. In any event, he did not mention it on the air, so I didn't when he phoned the next morning. The show was brief. I have been given to understand that after it was over he assaulted my integrity. I find this hard to believe. I hope to get a tape from someone who is supposed to have made one. What do you know about it?

If this was Joe's opinion, I do not know why he called me, or why he didn't wait until he has a copy of my own book on the subject. Also, whether or not it is

convincing to Joe, Russo's story was believed by the panel of judges and the grand jury. I'm satisfied to wait for the trial, which is the proper place now that Phelan has had his say. If Joe had had the experiences I've had, he'd be unwilling to say more than I would.

He should know what Aynesworth left out of his piece! But those not intimiately familiar with the subject matter have no way of knowing what the truth of the evidence is. Aynesworth could not have spent five weeks on that story and made any effort to learn any of the fact or he wrote a deliberately dishonest piece. I know things about those he mentioned he'd have had to try hard not to learn and he said nothing about these things. Unlike Phelan, he's supposed to be an expert on the subject. His is the publication that used the infelicitous phrase that Ferrie had been "picked clean". I use it!

I do hope this report is untrue. If it is not I will not fight with Joe, nor will I argue with him. He has been very good to me and I appreciate it. I have him favorably in the new book and will not take it out. He deserves it. You can guess the context. I did a lot with that beginning, even establishing the existence of the classification "crypto". And I will still send him one of the first copies when the book is printed.

I have heard little from the others that you don't know, including the latest Lifton exploit. He sure makes trouble. Too bad he is sick. He is bright. But not bright enough to cope with Liebeler.

Lyle Stuart is coming out with an FBI book that I've heard is good. It is in galley and he seems to have been plagued with strange mechanical troubles. We are not friends.

Yesterday I went to Washington by mistake, to deliver a speech I'm supposed to make this coming Tuesday. To give you an idea of what I could be doing if I were not so busy writing, I made two tapes, saw five correspondents, spent an hour at a TV station showing materials they'd never seen to the news staff, and was home by three o'clock, in between visits making arrangements for the display of both books in the editions I published at the American Booksellers' Association convention. Ah! to be your age again!

Again, thanks for everything and my regards to those you know I'd send them to.

Sincerely,